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Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-third session
1–12 March 1999
Agenda item 3 (c)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Draft agreed conclusions on women and health submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission

The Commission on the Status of Women

1. *Reaffirms* the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[1] notably chapter IV.C on women and health, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[2] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;[3]

2. *Requests* States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to take into account in their initial and periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation 24 on article 12 of the Convention, relating to women and health, adopted by the Committee at its twentieth session;

3. *Acknowledges* the link between women's health, women's status in society, poverty, ageing, violence and health-related taboos, as well as the importance of investing in women's health for the well-being of women themselves and for development;

4. *Proposes*, in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.C of the Beijing Platform for Action, that the following actions be taken:

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[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

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Actions to be taken by Governments, the health professions, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations system

1. Access to holistic health-care services and information

(a) Ensure access to all health services for women and girls;

(b) Within the primary health-care approach, integrate sexual, reproductive and mental health services to respond to the broad health needs of users in a life-cycle approach;

(c) Provide girls and boys with education on the different health needs of women within their life cycle, including education on sexuality and reproduction, taking into account the rights of the child to access to information, privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent, and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents;

(d) Secure funds also to protect the health of the most vulnerable population groups, particularly poor women throughout their life span, and to empower older women and women with disabilities to lead independent lives.

2. Sexual and reproductive health

(a) In order to bridge the gap between policies and implementation, accelerate efforts to implement the targets established in the Beijing Platform for Action with regard to universal access to quality health services, reduction of persistently high maternal mortality and infant and child mortality[4] and reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition and iron deficiency anaemia,[5] as well as to provide emergency obstetric services and implement existing strategies to prevent maternal deaths (treatment of infections, hypertension during pregnancy, unsafe abortion and post-partum haemorrhage), including the Safe Motherhood Initiative of the World Health Organization;

(b) Support the development of female-controlled methods that enhance women's risk-reduction options, including microbicides, post-coital/emergency contraception and dual methods that protect against both sexually transmitted diseases and HIV and unwanted pregnancy, in accordance with paragraph 96 of the Beijing Platform for Action, and promote methods of male contraception;

(c) Encourage men to accept their responsibilities as partners with regard to sexuality and reproduction;

(d) Develop policies and formulate legal tools to support activities aimed at eliminating the practice of female genital mutilation and other harmful practices and prevent their acceptance as medical practices.

3. HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and other infectious diseases

(a) Give HIV/AIDS prevention and care and the mitigation of its impact, including the provision of social services and support, and poverty alleviation, priority at the highest political level;

(b) Increase prevention efforts to reduce the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the affected areas as well as among the age groups most heavily at risk, in particular young women, including through improved access to the female condom, and promote the

[4] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* ..., chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 106 (l).

[5] See ibid., para. 106 (w).

development of a vaccine against HIV and accessibility to anti-retroviral therapy and treatment for HIV/AIDS-related illnesses;

(c) Increase efforts to eliminate sexual violence against women and girls, which is a major cause of HIV/AIDS infection;

(d) Ensure that stigmatization (for leprosy, filariasis, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases) does not lead to under-detection, lack of treatment and violence, especially with regard to women, and break the silence around HIV/AIDS;

(e) Encourage patients to inform their partners in the case of HIV infection, so as to protect them from infection, and counsel them as to ways of doing so.

4. Mental health and substance abuse

(a) Make available mental health services tailored to the gender-specific needs of women and men throughout the life cycle (e.g., treatment for civil and domestic trauma and injury, psychiatric illness, substance use);

(b) Encourage efforts to document gender differences in the causes and effects of the use of psychoactive substances, including smoking, and develop effective gender-sensitive approaches to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

5. Occupational and environmental health

(a) Increase support for research and take measures to reduce occupational and environmental health risks — short- and long-term — of work performed by both women and men, including risks in the household and from environmental chemicals;

(b) Protect the health of women who are entering the labour market in great numbers by designing work environments that are gender-sensitive, free from pesticides and ergonomically designed to prevent occupational hazards.

6. Research, training and policy development

(a) Improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age and develop collection methodologies that capture the differences between men's and women's life experiences, including gender-specific health indicators that go beyond morbidity, mortality and social indicators and capture social and mental well-being; international organizations should develop these gender-sensitive health indicators as soon as possible;

(b) Elaborate a gender-sensitive framework for mainstreaming gender in the health sector, including the elaboration of gender-sensitive health policies, the creation of an enabling environment supported by a legislative framework and monitoring mechanisms;

(c) Mainstream a gender perspective in the education and training of health professionals and provide gender training to health professionals.

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Commission on the Status of Women
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Agenda item 3 (c)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Revised draft agreed conclusions on women and health submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission

The Commission on the Status of Women

1. *Reaffirms* the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[1] notably chapter IV.C on women and health, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[2] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;[3]

2. *Recalls* the Constitution of the World Health Organization, which states that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity; that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition; and that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest cooperation of individuals and States;

3. *Requests* States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to consider, when preparing their initial and periodic reports under the Convention, including on article 12, general recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;

4. *Acknowledges* that the realization by women of their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is an integral part of the full

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex III.

[2] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (A/CONF.171/13/Rev.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

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realization by them of all human rights, and that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights;

5. *Acknowledges* the link between women's physical and mental health throughout the life cycle and the level of national development, including the availability of basic social services such as health services, women's status and degree of empowerment in society, employment and work, poverty, illiteracy, ageing, race and ethnicity, and violence in all its forms, in particular harmful attitudes and traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women, as well as the importance of investing in women's health for the well-being of women themselves and for the development of society as a whole;

6. *Recognizes* that lack of development is a major obstacle for women in many countries and that the international economic environment, through its impact on national economies, affects the capacity of many countries to provide and expand quality health services to women; further significant obstacles include competing governmental priorities and inadequate resources;

7. *Proposes*, in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.C of the Beijing Platform for Action, that the following actions be taken:

Actions to be taken by Governments, the United Nations system and civil society, as appropriate

1. Universal access, on a basis of equality between women and men, to quality, comprehensive and affordable health care and health services and information by women throughout the life cycle

(a) Ensure universal access on a basis of equality between women and men to appropriate, affordable and quality health care and health services for women throughout the life cycle;

(b) In order to bridge the gap between commitments and implementation, formulate policies favourable to investments in women's health and intensify efforts to meet the targets identified in the Platform for Action;

(c) Ensure universal access for women throughout the life cycle, on a basis of equality between women and men, to social services related to health care, including education, clean water and safe sanitation, nutrition, food security and health education programmes;

(d) Integrate sexual, reproductive and mental health services, with emphasis on preventative measures, within the primary health-care system to respond to the broad health needs of women and men, in a life-cycle approach;

(e) Design and implement programmes, with the full involvement of young people, to educate and inform them on sexual and reproductive health issues, taking into account the rights of the child to access to information, privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent, and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents and legal guardians;

(f) Allocate and reallocate, where appropriate, adequate resources to put in place the necessary measures which ensure that quality health services are accessible to those women throughout their life cycle who are living in poverty, are disadvantaged or socially excluded;

(g) Increase efforts directed towards poverty eradication, by assessing the impact of broader macroeconomic policies on the feminization of poverty and on women's health; and address the health needs of those vulnerable, throughout their life span;

(h) Adopt preventive and promotional health policies at an early stage where possible in order to prevent health problems and dependence of older women and enable them to lead independent and healthy lives;

(i) Ensure that special attention is given to supporting women with disabilities, and empower them to lead independent and healthy lives;

(j) Address the need for appropriate screening services for women, within the context of national health priorities;

(k) Encourage women to practise regular sport and recreational activities which have a positive impact on women's health, well-being and fitness throughout the whole life cycle, and ensure that women enjoy equal opportunities to practise sport, use sport facilities and take part in competitions.

2. Sexual and reproductive health

(a) Accelerate efforts for the implementation of the targets established in the Beijing Platform for Action with regard to universal access to quality and affordable health services, including reproductive and sexual health, reduction of persistently high maternal mortality and infant and child mortality[4] and reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition and iron deficiency anaemia,[5] as well as to provide maternal and essential obstetric care, including emergency care, and implement existing and develop new strategies to prevent maternal deaths, caused by, *inter alia*, infections, malnutrition, hypertension during pregnancy, unsafe abortion[6] and post-partum haemorrhage, and child deaths, taking into account the Safe Motherhood Initiative;

(b) Promote and support breastfeeding unless it is medically contra-indicated, as well as implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative;

(c) Support scientific research into and the development of safe, affordable, effective and easily-accessible female-controlled methods of family planning, including dual methods such as microbicides and female condoms that protect against both sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS and prevent pregnancy, taking into account paragraph 96 of the report of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(d) Support the development and widespread use of male contraceptive methods;

(e) Educate women and men, particularly young people, with a view to encouraging men to accept their responsibilities in matters related to sexuality, reproduction and child-rearing and to promoting equal relationships between women and men;

(f) Enhance women's ability and knowledge, and empower them to make informed choices, to prevent unwanted pregnancies;

(g) Work with the media and other sectors to encourage the development of positive attitudes about major transitions in women's and girls' reproductive lives, such as the onset

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[4] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women ...*, chap. I, resolution 1, annex III, para. 106 (l).

[5] Ibid., para. 106 (w).

[6] Ibid., para. 106 (k).

of menstruation and menopause, and provide appropriate support, where needed, for women undergoing these transitions;

(h) Eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation, and other harmful traditional and customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, since such practices constitute a definite form of violence against women and girls and a serious form of violation of their human rights, including through development of appropriate policies and enactment and/or reinforcement of legislation, and ensure development of appropriate tools of education and advocacy and adopt legislation outlawing their practice by medical personnel;

(i) Take all necessary measures to prevent all harmful practices such as early marriages, forced marriages and threats to women's right to life.

3. HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and other infectious diseases

(a) Support public education and advocacy and secure the highest level of political commitment to the prevention of and research into sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, their care, treatment and the mitigation of their impact, including through the provision of social services and support, together with poverty alleviation;

(b) Increase prevention measures to reduce the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic worldwide and sexually transmitted diseases among the groups most heavily at risk, in particular young people, including through education and awareness-raising campaigns and improved access to high-quality condoms and improved accessibility to anti-retroviral therapy to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and treatment, care and support for HIV/AIDS-related illnesses;

(c) Enact laws and take measures to eliminate sexual violence against women and girls, which is one of the causes of HIV/AIDS infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, and review and enact laws and combat practices, as appropriate, that may contribute to women's susceptibility to these infections, including enacting legislation against those socio-cultural practices that contribute to AIDS, and implement legislation, policies and practices to protect women, adolescents and young girls from discrimination related to HIV/AIDS;

(d) Eliminate the stigmatization and social exclusion that surround HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and other infectious diseases such as leprosy and filariasis, and lead to under-detection, lack of treatment and violence, especially for women, so that infected women who reveal their HIV status are protected from violence, stigmatization and other negative consequences;

(e) Increase the preventative, as well as the therapeutic, measures against tuberculosis and malaria, and accelerate the research into the development of a vaccine against malaria, which has a harmful effect especially on pregnant women in most parts of the world, particularly in Africa;

(f) Educate, counsel and encourage men and women infected with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases to inform their partners to help protect them from infection, and ensure that the spread of these diseases is curtailed.

4. Mental health and substance abuse

(a) Make available gender-sensitive and age-sensitive mental health services and counselling, as necessary, with particular attention to the treatment of psychiatric illness and trauma throughout the life cycle, *inter alia*, by integrating them into primary health-care systems and through appropriate referral support;

(b) Develop effective preventive and remedial health services to provide appropriate counselling and treatment for mental disorders related to stress, depression, powerlessness, marginalization and trauma since women and girls may suffer more from these ailments resulting from various forms of discrimination, violence and sexual exploitation, particularly in situations of armed conflict and displacement;

(c) Support research and dissemination of information on gender differences in the causes and effects of the use and abuse of substances, including narcotic drugs and alcohol, and develop effective gender-sensitive approaches to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, including those specifically designed for pregnant women;

(d) Design, implement and strengthen prevention programmes aimed at reducing tobacco use by women and girls; investigate the exploitation and targeting of young women by the tobacco industry; support action to prohibit tobacco advertising and access by minors to tobacco products; and support smoke-free spaces, gender-sensitive cessation programmes, and product labelling to warn of the dangers of tobacco use, noting the Tobacco Free Initiative proposed by the World Health Organization in July 1998;

(e) Promote equitable sharing of household and family responsibilities between women and men, and provide social support systems, where appropriate, to help women who, as a result of their multiple roles in the family, often may suffer from fatigue and stress;

(f) Support research on the relationship between women's and girls' physical and mental health, self-esteem and the extent to which women of all ages are valued in their societies to address issues such as substance abuse and eating disorders.

5. Occupational and environmental health

(a) Support gender-specific for research on the short- and long-term effects of the occupational and environmental health risks of work, including work in the formal and informal sector, performed by both women and men, and take effective legal and other measures to reduce these risks, including risks in the workplace, in the environment and from harmful chemicals, including pesticides, radiation, toxic waste and other such hazards that affect women's health;

(b) Protect the health of women workers in all sectors, including agricultural and domestic household workers, through effective environmental and occupational health policies for gender-sensitive work environments, free from sexual harassment and discrimination, which are safe and ergonomically designed to prevent occupational hazards;

(c) Take specific measures to protect the health of women workers who are pregnant or have recently given birth or are breast-feeding from harmful environmental and occupational hazards, and their children;

(d) Provide full and accurate information about environmental health risks to the public, in particular to women, and take steps to ensure access to clean water, adequate sanitation and clean air.

6. Policy development, research, training and evaluation

(a) Advance a comprehensive interdisciplinary and collaborative research agenda on women's health which encompasses the entire life span of all women, including women from special and diverse groups within populations;

(b) Establish concrete accountability mechanisms at the national level for reporting on the implementation of the health and other related critical areas of the Platform for Action;

(c) Improve the collection, use and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex and age, and research findings, and develop collection methodologies that capture the differences between women's and men's life experiences, including through the use and, where necessary, further coordinated development of gender-specific qualitative and quantitative health indicators that go beyond morbidity, mortality and social indicators, capturing quality of life, social as well as mental well-being of women and girls;

(d) Promote research on the interrelationship between poverty, ageing and gender;

(e) Ensure participation of women at all levels in the planning, implementation and evaluation of health programmes; ensure also a gender perspective in the health sector at all levels, including through the elaboration of gender- and age-sensitive health policies and budgets, and the creation of an enabling environment supported by a legislative framework and monitoring, follow-up and evaluation mechanisms within individual countries;

(f) Mainstream a gender perspective into the curricula as well as the training of all health care and service providers in order to ensure high-quality health services for women that can help eliminate discriminatory attitudes and practices by certain health professionals which impede women's access to health services; and ensure that a gender perspective is developed and applied to treatment and prevention practice in the health sector;

(g) In order to ensure that women's rights are addressed, the curricula of health care providers should include relevant human rights topics to strengthen medical ethics and ensure that girls and women are treated with respect and dignity;

(h) Increase education and research among health service providers and users to address the unnecessary medicalization of women's health conditions;

(i) Ensure, where indicated, that clinical trials of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and other medical products include women with their full knowledge and consent and ensure that the resulting data is analysed for sex and gender differences;

(j) Collect data concerning scientific and legal developments on human genome and related genetic research and their implications for women's health and women's rights in general and disseminate such information and results of studies conducted in accordance with accepted ethical standards.

7. Health sector reform and development

(a) Take action, in the context of health sector reform and development and growing diversification of the provision of care, to secure equal and equitable access to care for women and to ensure that health sector reform and development efforts promote women's health; and address under-provision of health care;

(b) Take the opportunity provided by health sector reform and development to systematically integrate the process of gender analysis in the health sector and undertake gender impact assessments and monitoring of all health sector reforms and development to ensure that women benefit equally from them;

(c) Develop strategies designed to seek to reduce occupational concentration by gender to eliminate gender-based pay inequality, to ensure high-quality working conditions in the health work force, and to provide appropriate skills training and development.

8. International cooperation

(a) Assure a strong political commitment by the international community to implement strengthened international cooperation for development and to mobilize domestic and international finance resources from all sources for development and the provision of health services for women;

(b) Promote progress in regard to external debt relief which, with improvement in the terms of trade, could help generate resources, both public and private, to expand and upgrade health services, with special attention to the physical and mental health of women;

(c) Encourage the international community, including bilateral donors and multilateral development organizations, to assist developing countries to ensure the provision of basic social services, including health care services for women, in particular during periods of economic difficulty; socially and gender-sensitive approaches to structural adjustment policies are further encouraged;

(d) Encourage concerted efforts, through enhanced cooperation and coordination to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the benefits of globalization and interdependence, to, *inter alia*, enhance the provision of health care services in developing countries, especially for women;

(e) In the framework of international cooperation encourage sound macroeconomic policies and institutions to, *inter alia*, support the provision of health care services for women.

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Draft agreed conclusions on institutional mechanisms, submitted by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, Nonhlanhla P. L. Mlangeni (Swaziland)

The Commission on the Status of Women

1. *Reaffirms* the Beijing Platform for Action,[1] adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, notably chapter IV.H on institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[2] and Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2[3] on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system;

2. *Recognizes* that the legitimacy and sustainability of national machineries are highly dependent on their embeddedness in the national context, including the national culture, the political system and needs of women. However, sharing information and good practices beyond national borders is crucial for strengthening national machineries;

3. *Acknowledges* that national machineries are necessary for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. For national machineries to be effective, clear mandates, a transparent political process, adequate financial resources and continued strong political commitment are crucial;

4. *Proposes*, in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.H of the Beijing Platform for Action, that the following action be taken:

[1] Report of the *Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[3] See document A/52/3, chap. IV, sect. A, para. 4.

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The role of national machineries in gender mainstreaming

Actions to be taken by national machineries

(a) Act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes and not necessarily as agents for policy implementation. However, national machineries should be partners in policy formulation and may also choose to implement and coordinate specific projects;

(b) Support the establishment of gender focal points at the decision-making levels in all ministries and other decision-making bodies and develop close cooperation with them;

(c) Create/support autonomous "think tanks" involved in research, analysis and evaluation of activities on gender mainstreaming;

(d) Provide assistance to agencies including those outside government in formulating gender-sensitive performance indicators, necessary to measure and review progress made in the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming;

(e) Create or strengthen collaborative links with other agencies at local, regional, national and international levels, in order to share good practices, leverage their resources and avoid duplications in their work. In particular, links with national machineries at subregional and regional level should be strengthened;

(f) In order to ensure effective gender mainstreaming, decentralize their functions and activities to municipal, provincial, national and regional levels;

(g) Create or strengthen bodies outside government, such as the ombudsperson and equal opportunity commission, with responsibility for ensuring compliance with gender equality legislation;

(h) Give visibility to the issue of unremunerated work through their advocacy role to ensure that relevant ministries and organizations including the ministry of finance, the statistical office and labour unions will measure it, value it and adopt a proper policy decision in this respect;

(i) Assess and address the needs of their constituencies and ensure that the visions and interests of the majority of women, of all classes, from all sectors and areas, and especially of those who are not organized, and live in poverty in rural and urban areas, are mainstreamed in all policies and programmes.

Actions to be taken by Governments

(a) Provide adequate and sustainable financial resources to national machineries through national budgets;

(b) Strengthen the relation between civil society, all governmental agencies and national machineries;

(c) Support national machineries in recognizing the substantial contribution made by women through unpaid work, and develop tools and mechanisms to evaluate, measure and value such contributions.

Actions to be taken by the international community

(a) Encourage multilateral, bilateral, donor and development agencies to include in their programmes of assistance, activities that strengthen national machineries;

(b) Develop gender-sensitive data and qualitative performance indicators, disaggregated by sex to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and implementation of programmes;

(c) Encourage Governments and national machineries to incorporate the views of civil society in their reporting to international bodies on gender and women's issues;

(d) Document and publish "good practices", and provide logistical support and access to information technology. In this regard, the offices of United Nations resident coordinators, in particular the women in development programmes and gender units, should play a critical role;

(e) Encourage multilateral development institutions and bilateral donors to make available methodology already developed on measurement and valuation of unwaged work and to provide technical and other resources to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(f) In order to elaborate a systematic and comprehensive approach to data collection on unrenumerated work, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat should prepare and circulate among Member States a detailed and well-structured questionnaire.

Links with civil society

Actions to be taken by national machineries

(a) Create and strengthen the relationship with non-governmental organizations. Wherever possible, such relationships should be institutionalized. This will enhance the bargaining position of national machineries vis-à-vis government and also promote their legitimacy;

(b) Establish partnerships and consult with women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, the media and other agencies on national and international policies relating to women and gender in order to raise awareness of gender equality and the international commitments of their Governments, and promote research findings and information on women and gender equality;

(c) Coordinate with non-governmental organizations and civil society on national and international activities including elaborating national action plans, drafting reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and implementing the Platform for Action;

(d) Engage the mass media to move towards re-examining gender stereotypes and changing the traditional portrayal of both women and men.

Links with the private sector

Create and strengthen collaborative relationships with the private sector, including through initiating advocacy dialogue to address the issues affecting working women.

Mechanisms and tools to promote and strengthen accountability

Actions to be taken by Governments

Ensure accountability of Governments to parliaments and civil society based on transparency and effective monitoring mechanisms and tools such as gender budgeting, gender auditing, gender impact assessment, benchmarks, other performance indicators and regular public reporting.

Actions to be taken by legislative and judiciary bodies

(a) Ensure transparency through open and participatory dialogue and the promotion of balanced participation of women and men in all areas of decision-making;

(b) Whenever appropriate, involve parliaments and the judiciary in monitoring progress in gender mainstreaming and strengthening gender-related aspects of all government reporting.

Actions to be taken by non-governmental organizations

Monitor governmental accountability through advocacy roles, raising awareness of gender equality issues, media support and regional, national and international legally binding agreements.

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Revised draft agreed conclusions on institutional mechanisms, submitted by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, Nonhlanhla P. L. Mlangeni (Swaziland)

The Commission on the Status of Women

1. *Reaffirms* the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[1] notably chapter IV.H on institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[2] and Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system;[3]

2. *Recognizes* that the effectiveness and sustainability of national machineries are highly dependent on their embeddedness in the national context, the political and socio-economic system and the needs of and accountability to women, including those with the least access to resources; in addition, recognizes that sharing information at the regional and international levels is crucial for strengthening national machineries and other related institutional mechanisms; that gender equality is advanced through the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for democracy, peace and development; and that the full involvement of women and men is essential;

3. *Further recognizes* that gender mainstreaming is a tool for effective policy-making at all levels and not a substitute for targeted, women-specific policies and programmes, equality legislation, national machineries for the advancement of women and the establishment of gender focal points;

[1] Report of the *Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[3] See A/52/3, chap. IV, sect. A, para. 4.

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4. *Acknowledges* that national machineries are necessary for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action; and that for national machineries to be effective, clear mandates, location at the highest possible level, accountability mechanisms, partnership with civil society, a transparent political process, adequate financial and human resources and continued strong political commitment are crucial;

5. *Stresses* the importance of international cooperation in order to assist the work of national mechanisms in all countries especially developing countries;

6. *Welcomes* Economic and Social Council decision 1998/298, by which the Council decided to devote the high-level segment of its 1999 substantive session to the advancement of women;

7. *Proposes*, in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.H of the Beijing Platform for Action, that the following action be taken:

Actions by Governments, national machineries and other institutional mechanisms, and the international community, including the United Nations system, for the advancement of women and for gender equality

A. Actions to be taken by Governments

(a) Provide continued strong political commitment to supporting the strengthening of national machineries and the advancement of women;

(b) Ensure that national machineries are placed at the highest possible level of government and all institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women are invested with the authority needed to fulfil their mandated roles and responsibilities;

(c) Provide adequate and sustainable financial and human resources to national machineries and other institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women through national budgets, while also granting national machinery the possibility of attracting funds from other bodies for the purpose of specific projects;

(d) Structure appropriately the functions of national machineries at all levels in order to ensure effectiveness in gender mainstreaming;

(e) Ensure that mainstreaming a gender perspective is fully understood, institutionalized and implemented. These efforts should include promoting awareness and understanding of the Platform for Action;

(f) Continue to take steps to ensure that the integration of a gender perspective in the mainstream of all government activities is part of a dual and complementary strategy to achieve gender equality. This includes a continuing need for targeted priorities, policies, programmes and positive action measures;

(g) Ensure that senior management in each ministry or agency takes responsibility for fulfilling gender equality commitments and integrating a gender perspective in all activities, and that appropriate assistance from gender experts or gender focal points is available;

(h) Ensure that senior management in each ministry or agency takes the responsibility for guaranteeing that the goal of gender equality is pursued, that a gender perspective is integrated in all activities and that senior managers get appropriate assistance from gender experts or gender focal points;

(i) Promote and ensure, as appropriate, the establishment of effective gender focal points at all decision-making levels and in all ministries and other decision-making bodies, develop close collaboration among them and create follow-up mechanisms;

(j) Create and/or encourage the creation and strengthening of institutional mechanisms at all levels, including taking all measures to ensure that national machineries as well as focal points within specific institutions are not marginalized in the administrative structure but supported at the highest possible level of government and entrusted with clearly defined mandates which define their function as a policy advisory body;

(k) Promote capacity-building including gender training for both women and men in government ministries so as to be more responsive to the needs and interests of women and gender equality, and develop their own capacity by making use of available national and international models and methodologies in the field of gender equality;

(l) Promote, where appropriate, and ensure accountability and transparency of government through effective monitoring mechanisms and tools such as gender-disaggregated statistics, gender budgeting, gender auditing and gender impact assessment, based on established benchmarks, and other performance indicators and regular public reporting, including under international agreements;

(m) Provide assistance, as appropriate, to agencies including those outside government in formulating gender-sensitive performance indicators, necessary to measure and review progress made in the field of gender equality, including the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming;

(n) Continuously improve the gathering and disaggregation of data and the development of statistics and indicators in all critical areas of the Platform for Action for use in analysis, policy development and planning;

(o) Give visibility to the relationship between remunerated and unremunerated work and its importance to gender analysis, and promote greater understanding among relevant ministries and organizations by developing methods for assessing its value in quantitative terms in order to develop appropriate policies in this respect;

(p) Recognize and acknowledge that unremunerated work by women in, for example agriculture, food production, natural resources management, caring for dependants and household and voluntary work, is a considerable contribution to society. Develop and improve mechanisms, for example time-use studies, to measure in quantitative terms unremunerated work in order to:

- Make visible the unequal distribution between women and men of remunerated and unremunerated work in order to promote changes;
- Assess the real value of unremunerated work and accurately reflect it in satellite or other official accounts that are separate from but consistent with core national accounts;

(q) Strengthen the relations among civil society, all governmental agencies and national machineries;

(r) Ensure that the needs, rights and interests of all women, including those who are not members of organizations, and live in poverty in rural and urban areas, are identified and mainstreamed into policy and programme development. This should be done in ways that value the diversity of women and recognize the barriers many women face that prohibit and prevent their participation in public policy development;

(s) Respect the involvement of non-governmental organizations in assisting Governments in the implementation of regional, national and international commitments through advocacy and raising awareness of gender equality issues. Women should be actively involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action;

(t) Coordinate or consult with, as appropriate, non-governmental organizations and civil society in national and international activities including elaborating national action plans, preparing reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and implementing the Platform for Action;

(u) Ensure transparency through open and participatory dialogue and the promotion of balanced participation of women and men in all areas of decision-making;

(v) Support autonomous organizations and institutions involved in research, analysis and evaluation of activities on gender issues and use the results to influence the transformation of policies and programmes;

(w) Create clear anti-discrimination regulations with adequate mechanisms, including a proper legal framework for addressing violations;

(x) Initiate, where necessary, gender equality legislation and create or strengthen, where appropriate, independent bodies, such as the ombudsperson and equal opportunity commission, with responsibility and authority for *inter alia*, promoting and ensuring compliance with gender equality legislation;

(y) Involve parliaments and, wherever appropriate, the judiciary in monitoring progress in gender mainstreaming and strengthening gender-related aspects of all government reporting, and ensure transparency through open and participatory dialogue and the promotion of balanced participation of women and men in all areas and at all levels of decision-making.

B. Actions to be taken by national machineries and other institutional mechanisms

(a) Design, promote the implementation of, execute, monitor, evaluate and mobilize support for policies that promote the advancement of women and advocate gender equality and promote public debate;

(b) Act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes and not necessarily as agents for policy implementation. However, national machineries are partners in policy formulation and may also choose to implement and coordinate specific projects;

(c) Assist other parts of Government in taking specific actions in the gathering and disaggregation of data and the development of statistics and indicators in all critical areas of the Platform for Action for use in analysis, policy development, planning and programming;

(d) Promote research and dissemination of research findings and information on women and gender equality, including disparities of income and workload between women and men and, where appropriate, among women;

(e) Take specific actions, *inter alia*, the establishment of documentation centres, to disseminate gender-relevant data and other information, including on the important contribution of women to society and research results in easily accessible formats and places in order to promote more informed public dialogue, including through the media, on gender equality and issues pertinent to the advancement of women;

(f) Ensure the ongoing training on gender issues, at all levels, of the personnel of the national machineries to promote programme and policy sustainability;

(g) Develop, as appropriate, policies to recruit technical staff with expertise in gender equality issues;

(h) Create or strengthen collaborative links with other agencies at local, regional, national and international levels;

(i) Recognize civil society as an important source of support and legitimacy and therefore create and strengthen the relationship with civil society through regular consultations with non-governmental organizations, the research community, social partners and other concerned groups. This will create a strong basis for gender-sensitive policy and the advancement of women;

(j) Establish partnerships, liaise and consult with women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, the media and other agencies on national and international policies relating to women and gender and inform them of the international commitments of their Governments;

(k) Engage the media in dialogue aimed at re-examining gender stereotypes and negative portrayal of both women and men;

(l) Create and strengthen collaborative relationships with the private sector, including through initiating advocacy dialogue and advising private companies to address the issues affecting women in the paid labour force, and set up ways and means to promote equality of women and men.

C. Actions to be taken by the international community, including the United Nations system

(a) Implement Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2;[3]

(b) Implement fully the revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women (1996–2001);

(c) Ensure that individual managers are held accountable for implementing the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995–2000) within their areas of responsibility, and that heads of departments and offices develop gender action plans which establish concrete strategies for the achievement of gender balance in individual departments and offices, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution and in conformity with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, so as to ensure, as far as possible, that the appointment and promotion of women will not be less than 50 per cent, until the goal of 50/50 gender distribution is met;

(d) Request the Administrative Committee on Coordination Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality to continue its work to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and to promote the integration of a gender perspective in the implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits;

(e) Support the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, including through support for the important activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the fulfilment of their respective mandates;

(f) Support national Governments in their efforts to strengthen national mechanisms through official development assistance (ODA) and other appropriate assistance;

(g) Encourage multilateral, bilateral, donor and development agencies to include in their programmes of assistance, activities that strengthen national machineries;

(h) Encourage Governments and national machineries to undertake wide consultations with their civil societies when providing information on gender and women's issues to relevant international bodies;

(i) Document and publish "good practices", and provide logistical support and ensure equal access to information technology wherever appropriate. In this regard, the offices of United Nations resident coordinators, in particular the women in development programmes and gender units, should play a critical role;

(j) Develop and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and qualitative performance indicators to ensure effective gender-sensitive planning, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of programmes;

(k) Encourage multilateral development institutions, bilateral donors, and international non-governmental organizations to make available methodology already developed on the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data measurement and valuation of unwaged work and to provide technical assistance and other resources, including financial resources as appropriate, to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(l) In order to elaborate a systematic and comprehensive approach to information on unremunerated work, the Division of the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat should prepare and circulate among all States a detailed and well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire should seek inputs on developments in measuring and valuing unremunerated work and on policies and programmes as well as laws that recognize and address such work;

(m) Request the Division for the Advancement of Women to expand the Directory of National Machineries, by including, for example, mandates, number of staff, e-mail addresses, fax numbers and working-level contacts, so that this comprehensive information can facilitate better communication among national machineries around the world.

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1–12 March 1999
Agenda item 8
Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-third session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Zuzana **Vranova** (Slovakia)

Chapter ___. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-third session at United Nations Headquarters from 1 to 12 March 1999. The Commission held ____ meetings (1st to ____). In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1997/227, the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women also met during the session.

2. The session was opened by the Chairperson, Patricia Flor (Germany), who also made a statement.

B. Attendance

3. The session was attended by representatives of ____ States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for non-member States, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex ____ to the present report.

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C. Election of officers

4. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/21, the officers elected to the Bureau of the Commission at its forty-second session were to serve as officers during the forty-third session. The Bureau therefore comprised:

Chairperson:
Patricia Flor (Germany)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Karam Fadi Habib (Lebanon)
Marcela Maria Nicodemos (Brazil)
Nonhlanhla P. L. Mlangeni (Swaziland)
Zuzana Vranova (Slovakia)

5. At its 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Commission designated Zuzana Vranova Vice-Chairperson with rapporteurial responsibilities.

D. Agenda and organization of work

6. At its 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda and approved its organization of work, as contained in document E/CN.6/1999/1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women:
   (a) Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system;
   (b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;
   (c) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern.
4. Initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and preparation for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000.
5. Communications concerning the status of women.
6. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention.
7. Provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Commission.
8. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-third session.

7. Also at its 1st meeting, the Commission was informed that Aloisia Wörgetter (Austria) would continue to serve as Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, established in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/29.

E. Appointment of the members of a working group on communications on the status of women

8. The Commission established a working group to consider, under agenda item 5, communications concerning the status of women, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/27. The following five members, nominated by their regional groups, were appointed:

Esmaeil Afshari (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Eduardo Tapia (Chile)
Diénébou Kaba Camara (Côte d'Ivoire)
Didier Le Bret (France)
Aleksandra Duda (Poland)

F. Consultations with non-governmental organizations

9. Written statements, submitted by non-governmental organizations in accordance with rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council were circulated in documents E/CN.6/1999/NGO/1–7.

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Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-third session
1–12 March 1999
Agenda item 3 (a)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system

Argentina,* Azerbaijan,* Bangladesh,* Bosnia and Herzegovina,* Colombia,* Ecuador,* Georgia,* Guatemala,* Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan,* Kazakhstan,* Kyrgyzstan,* Malaysia, Namibia,* Nigeria,* Pakistan,* Peru, South Africa,* Tajikistan,* Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan,* Uzbekistan* and Zimbabwe:* draft resolution

Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling its resolutions 39/2 of 31 March 1995, 40/1 of 22 March 1996, 41/1 of 21 March 1997 and 42/2 of 13 March 1998,

Recalling also the relevant provisions contained in the instruments of international humanitarian law relative to the protection of women and children in areas of armed conflict,

Welcoming the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[1] including the provisions regarding violence against women and children,

Expressing grave concern at the continuation of armed conflicts in many regions throughout the world and the human suffering and humanitarian emergencies they have caused,

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

99-06327 (E) 080399

Emphasizing that all forms of violence committed against the civilian population, including women and children in areas of armed conflict, including capturing them as hostages, seriously contravene international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the protection of victims of war,[2]

Expressing its strong belief that the rapid and unconditional release of women and children taken hostage in areas of armed conflict will promote the implementation of the noble goals enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action,

1. *Condemns* violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against civilian women and children in areas of armed conflict, and calls for an effective response to such acts, including the immediate release of such women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts;

2. *Strongly urges* all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law in armed conflict and to take all necessary measures for the protection of these women and children and for their immediate release;

3. *Urges* all parties to conflicts to provide unimpeded access to specialized humanitarian assistance for these women and children;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General and all relevant international organizations to use their capabilities and efforts to facilitate the release of these women and children;

5. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, taking into account the information provided by States and relevant international organizations, a report on the implementation of the present resolution, for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session.

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[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

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Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-third session
1–12 March 1999
Agenda item 3 (c)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Zambia:* draft resolution

Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recognizing that women play a vital role in the social and economic development of their countries and therefore profoundly concerned by the fact that out of 33.4 million people living with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) today, women now represent 43 per cent of all people over the age of 15 living with HIV and AIDS,

Noting with great concern that the proportion of women becoming infected with HIV is growing in every region, that in sub-Saharan Africa there are already 6 women with HIV for every 5 men, and that in the younger age brackets (15–24 years), the HIV risk for African girls is even more disproportionate,

Recognizing that gender inequalities begin early in life and can render women and the girl child unable to protect their sexual and reproductive health, thus increasing their risk and vulnerability to HIV infection,

Mindful that the majority of women and the girl child in most developing countries do not enjoy full social and economic rights, such as education, health care, welfare, and therefore suffer disproportionately from the consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly in the economic and social spheres,

Recognizing that women who constitute the majority of the poor are especially vulnerable to HIV infection because of their subordinate status in society, in the households

* On behalf of the Group of African States and in accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

99-06346 (E) 090399

and communities and because of their restricted access to education, gainful employment and health and information services,

Also recognizing that women and, in particular, young girls, are physiologically and biologically more vulnerable than men to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and yet receive minimal health care and support when infected,

Noting with concern that approximately 80 per cent of the infected women have been infected through unprotected sex with an infected male partner, and acknowledging therefore that men have a shared responsibility towards protecting their own and women's sexual health,

Acknowledging that millions of women do not have access to means that have proved effective in preventing and lowering infection rates, such as male and female condoms, anti-retroviral drugs, relevant preventive education, acceptable counselling and testing services,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and its co-sponsoring organizations, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Bank, to empower women through capacity development programmes, as well as programmes that provide women with access to development resources and strengthen their networks which offer care and support to women affected by HIV/AIDS,

1. *Reaffirms* the rights of women and the girl child infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to have access to health, education and social services and to be protected from all forms of discrimination, stigma, abuse and neglect;

2. *Also reaffirms* the human rights of girls and women to have equal access to education, skills training and employment opportunities as a means to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection;

3. *Urges* Governments to take all necessary measures to strengthen women's economic independence, to protect and promote their human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to allow them to better protect themselves from HIV infection;

4. *Emphasizes* that the advancement and empowerment of women is critical to increasing the ability of women and young girls to protect themselves from HIV infection;

5. *Stresses* that every effort should be made by Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively, to place combating HIV/AIDS as a priority on the development agenda and to implement effective prevention strategies and programmes, especially for the most vulnerable populations, including women and young girls;

6. *Calls upon* the international community, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their support of national efforts against HIV/AIDS, particularly in favour of women and young girls, in the worst-hit regions of Africa and where the epidemic is severely setting back national development gains;

7. *Urges* Governments to take steps to create an environment that promotes compassion and support for those infected with HIV, to provide the legal framework that will protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, to enable those who are vulnerable

to have access to appropriate voluntary counselling services and to encourage efforts to reduce discrimination and stigmatization;

8. *Also urges* Governments, with the assistance of relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to create an environment and conditions that will take care of and support children orphaned by AIDS;

9. *Further urges* Governments, with the assistance of relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, to adopt a long-term, timely, coherent and integrated AIDS prevention policy, with public information and education programmes specifically tailored to the needs of women and girls within their sociocultural contexts and sensitivities and specific needs in their life cycle;

10. *Encourages* Governments and the civil society to support women's groups and community organizations in changing harmful traditions and practices affecting the health of women and girls and to take steps to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including rape and sexual coercion, which aggravate the conditions fostering the spread of the epidemic;

11. *Encourages* accelerated research on vaccine development and intensified additional research on promotion of the female condom, microbicides and other options that offer women more control for the protection of their reproductive and sexual health;

12. *Requests* Governments to ensure that condoms and care for sexually transmitted diseases are available in places accessible and affordable to women while ensuring their privacy;

13. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in promoting sexual and reproductive health education for young people, in particular girls, while encouraging them to delay sexual initiation, and, in this context, urges that greater attention must be given to the education of men and boys about their roles and their responsibilities in preventing the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, to their partners;

14. *Urges* the Joint United Nations Programme and its co-sponsors to intensify their efforts in assisting Governments to determine the best policies and programmes to prevent women and young girls from becoming infected with HIV/AIDS;

15. *Requests* the Joint Programme and its co-sponsors, bilateral and multilateral donors, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in their efforts to prevent HIV infection, to give urgent and priority attention to the situation of women and girls in Africa;

16. *Invites* the relevant entities of the United Nations system, including agencies, funds and programmes, to mainstream gender policies and programmes integrating HIV/AIDS activities;

17. *Invites* the Secretary-General to report to the forty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the implementation of the present resolution.

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1–12 March 1999
Agenda item 3 (a)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system

Argentina,* Australia,* Austria,* Belgium, Canada,* Chile, Denmark,* Dominican Republic, Ecuador,* Finland,* France, Germany, Ghana, Ireland,* Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan,* Luxembourg,* Netherlands,* Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal,* Spain,* Sweden,* Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: draft resolution

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan

The Economic and Social Council,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenants on Human Rights,[2] the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,[3] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[4] the Convention on the Rights

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

[1] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[2] General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution 39/46, annex.

[4] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

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of the Child,[5] the Beijing Declaration[6] and Platform for Action[7] adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and other instruments of human rights and international humanitarian law,

Recalling that Afghanistan is a party to the Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide,[8] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[2] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,[3] the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[5] and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,[9] and that it has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,[10]

Deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, in particular in all areas under the control of the Taliban movement, as documented by the continued and substantiated reports of grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, such as denial of access to health care, to all levels and types of education, to employment outside the home and, in repeated instances, to humanitarian aid, as well as restrictions upon their freedom of movement,

Welcoming the ongoing work of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, in particular his special focus on violations of the human rights of women and girls, especially in territories under the control of the Taliban faction,

Noting with concern the detrimental impact of these harmful conditions on the well-being of Afghan women and the children in their care,

Welcoming the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan in November 1997, conducted by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, taking into account the report on the mission and hoping that the mission will serve as a model for future efforts to address the gender dimension of crisis/conflict situations,

Expressing its appreciation for the international community's support of and solidarity with the women and girls of Afghanistan, being supportive of the women of Afghanistan who protest violations of their human rights, and encouraging women and men worldwide to continue efforts to draw attention to their situation and to promote the immediate restoration of their ability to enjoy their human rights,

1. *Condemns* the continuing grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination and violence against them, in all areas of Afghanistan, particularly in areas under the control of the Taliban;

2. *Condemns also* the Taliban's denial of women's access to health care and the systematic violation of the human rights of women in Afghanistan, including the denial of access to education and to employment outside their home, freedom of movement, and

[5] General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

[6] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[7] *Ibid.*, annex II.

[8] General Assembly resolution 260 A (III).

[9] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

[10] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

freedom from intimidation, harassment and violence, which has a serious detrimental impact on the well-being of Afghan women and the children in their care;

3. *Urges* the Taliban and other Afghan parties to recognize, protect, promote and act in accordance with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion, in accordance with international human rights instruments, and to respect international humanitarian law;

4. *Urges* all the Afghan parties, in particular the Taliban, to bring to an end without delay all human rights violations against women and girls and to take urgent measures to ensure:

(a) The repeal of all legislative and other measures that discriminate against women;

(b) The effective participation of women in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life;

(c) Respect for the equal right of women to work and their reintegration in employment;

(d) The equal right of women and girls to education without discrimination, the reopening of schools and the admission of women and girls to all levels of education;

(e) Respect for the right of women to security of person and that those responsible for physical attacks on women are brought to justice;

(f) Respect for freedom of movement for women;

(g) Respect for women's and girls' equal access to health care;

5. *Encourages* the continuing efforts of the United Nations, international and non-governmental organizations and donors to ensure that all United Nations-assisted programmes in Afghanistan are formulated and coordinated in such a way as to promote and ensure the participation of women in those programmes, and that women benefit equally with men from such programmes;

6. *Appeals* to all States and to the international community to ensure that all humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, in conformity with the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan, is based on the principle of non-discrimination, integrates a gender perspective and actively attempts to promote the participation of both women and men and to promote peace and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

7. *Urges* States to continue to give special attention to the promotion and protection of human rights of women in Afghanistan and to mainstream a gender perspective into all aspects of their policies and actions related to Afghanistan;

8. *Welcomes* the establishment of the positions of Gender Coordinator and Human Rights Coordinator at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance for Afghanistan, in order to ensure more effective consideration and implementation of human rights and gender concerns into all United Nations programmes, taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan conducted by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in November 1997;

9. *Urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that all United Nations activities in Afghanistan are carried out according to the principle of non-discrimination against women and girls and that a gender perspective and special attention to the human rights of women and girls are fully incorporated into the work of the civil affairs unit established within the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, including the training and selection of staff;

10. *Stresses* the importance of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan giving special attention to the human rights of women and girls and fully incorporating a gender perspective in his work;

11. *Appeals* to States and the international community to implement the recommendations of the inter-agency gender mission to Afghanistan under the leadership of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women;

12. *Urges* all Afghan factions, in particular the Taliban, to ensure the safety and protection of all United Nations and humanitarian workers in Afghanistan and to allow them, regardless of gender, to carry out their work unhindered.

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Agenda item 3 (c)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Kenya*, Panama*, Philippines*, Thailand and Zambia*: draft resolution

Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women[1] that women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,

Recalling that the Platform for Action, in the critical area on women and health,[2] included women's mental health on the agenda for women's empowerment, by asserting that health was a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being; women had the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; health and well-being eluded the majority of women; and one of the major barriers for women to the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health was gender-based inequality,

Upholding the importance of attaining full mental health for all people, as recognized in General Assembly resolution 46/119 of 17 December 1991, entitled "The protection of persons with mental illness and the improvement of mental health care",

Welcoming the strong commitments to women and mental health made by the Director General of the World Health Organization at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women,

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* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II

[2] Ibid., annex II, para. 89

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Concerned that depression affects women twice as often as men, owing, among other factors, to the imposed inferior social and economic status of women and girls throughout the world,

Concerned also that women throughout their life cycle experience tremendous health burdens created by gender discrimination; all forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence; lack of appropriate physical and mental health care, nutrition and education or access to them; high rates of illiteracy; and the stress of multiple and conflicting roles,

Acknowledging that special attention must be given to the mental health needs of women, including those who are marginalized because of, *inter alia*, race, ethnicity, religion, age, social and economic status, physical and/or mental disability, exploitative commercial sex, displacement, migration and HIV/AIDS,

1. *Calls* for the urgent implementation of the health objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and other relevant international agreements with the integration of mental health as a priority issue;

2. *Requests* Governments to include in their national policies and plans of action for women specific measures that would address the mental health needs of women and girls, especially the need for psychosocial care and counselling services;

3. *Calls upon* Governments to take all possible steps to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in mental health care and to provide access to appropriate treatment that is responsive to women's mental health needs at all ages;

4. *Urges* Governments to develop and implement public awareness campaigns on mental health and education and public health policies that are gender-sensitive and focus on women and girls who are most in need of psychological support;

5. *Requests* Governments to provide or enhance mental health education and both pre-service and in-service training to primary health care workers, social service professionals, teachers and other educators, and community workers;

6. *Calls upon* Governments to develop and implement legislation and comprehensive social and economic policies that address the mental health needs of women and girls;

7. *Encourages* non-governmental organizations, private funding institutions and individual donors to organize and support, with the consent of the Governments concerned, mercy missions (along the lines of Médecins sans frontières) to areas where psychological/psychiatric problems are prevalent among the population, in particular among poor urban and rural women, with a view to providing not only primary treatment but also training for family members and/or other persons who may take over the care of the afflicted persons;

8. *Requests* pharmaceutical companies to donate medicines for the treatment of mental disorders, or to make them more affordable to areas where psychological/psychiatric problems are prevalent;

9. *Requests* the relevant United Nations bodies, in collaboration with relevant agencies, to adopt measures and develop projects that address and support the mental health needs of women and girls;

10. *Calls upon* the United Nations to develop and disseminate a training manual designed to provide primary health care workers, social service professionals, and other community workers with the appropriate skills for assisting women and girls who are

experiencing problems and mental disorders as a result of trauma, all forms of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and oppression;

11. *Urges* the Secretary-General to find ways within the United Nations and in coordination with other relevant agencies to organize regional expert group meetings with a view to developing gender- and age-disaggregated and gender-sensitive psychosocial and mental health situation analyses and indicators as bases for determining progress in women's and girls' emotional well-being and mental health, for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session;

12. *Invites* concerned non-governmental organizations, funding sources and the private sector to support and develop a programme that will bring a wide range of expertise and proven interventions to the training of local community workers, teachers and primary health care staff and provide appropriate interventions for stress-related disorders to girls and women in crisis;

13. *Decides* to include in the framework of the review process for the special session of the General Assembly to appraise and assess progress achieved in implementation of the Beijing Programme for Action the emerging issue of mental health of girls and women, so that further initiatives and action can be undertaken;

14. *Invites* States Members and United Nations agencies concerned to report on existing measures relevant to the present resolution, and/or taken to implement it, for consideration by the Commission at its forty-fourth session.

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Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-third session
1–12 March 1999
Agenda item 3 (c)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Guyana:* draft resolution

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Palestinian women

The Economic and Social Council,

Having considered with appreciation the section concerning the situation of Palestinian women and assistance provided by organizations of the United Nations system of the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[1]

Recalling the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,[2] in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children, and the Beijing Platform for Action[3] adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Recalling also its resolution 1998/10 of 28 July 1998 and other relevant United Nations resolutions,

Recalling further the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women[4] as it concerns the protection of civilian populations,

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China and in accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

[1] E/CN.6/1999/2/sect. IV.A.

[2] *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15–26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

[3] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[4] General Assembly resolution 48/104.

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Gravely concerned at the suspension, on 20 December 1998, by the Government of Israel of the implementation of the Wye River Memorandum, signed in Washington, D.C., on 23 October 1998, including the negotiations on the final settlement, which should be concluded by May 1999,

Concerned about the continuing difficult situation of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and about the severe consequences of continuous illegal Israeli settlements activities, as well as the harsh economic conditions and other consequences for the situation of Palestinian women and their families, resulting from the frequent closures and isolation of the occupied territory,

1. *Stresses* its support for the Middle East peace process and the need for speedy and full implementation of the agreements already reached between the parties;

2. *Affirms* that, in spite of the actual deterioration of the Middle East peace process as a result of the lack of compliance by the Government of Israel with the existing agreements, increased efforts must be exerted to bring the peace process back on track towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region and the achievement of tangible results towards the improvement of the situation of Palestinian women and their families;

3. *Reaffirms* that the Israeli occupation remains a major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the development planning of their society;

4. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply fully with the provisions and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[5] the Regulations annexed to The Hague Convention of 1907[6] and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949,[7] in order to protect the rights of the Palestinian women and their families;

5. *Calls upon* Israel to facilitate the return of all refugees and displaced Palestinian women and children to their homes and properties in the occupied Palestinian territory, in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

6. *Urges* Member States, financial organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other relevant institutions to intensify their efforts to provide financial and technical assistance to Palestinian women for the creation of projects responding to their needs, especially during the transitional period;

7. *Requests* the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to monitor and take action with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children, and the Beijing Platform for Action;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation and to assist Palestinian women by all available means, and to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

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[5] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[6] See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

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Commission on the Status of Women
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Agenda item 3 (a)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system

Text submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 2002–2005

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1996/34 of 25 July 1996 on the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001 in which it called for a new draft plan to cover the period 2002–2005,

Considering that the new draft plan should take into consideration the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on progress achieved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action,[1]

1. *Invites* the Secretary-General, in his capacity as chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to formulate the plan for 2002–2005 in two phases — a first phase consisting of an assessment of activities undertaken by the United Nations system and of obstacles encountered and lessons learned from the present plan and the system-wide process of its implementation, and the second phase consisting of a new plan that reflects the growing emphasis on action and delivery;

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

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2. *Decides* that the assessment should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on the Status of Women in the year 2000 and that the new plan for 2002-2005 should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission in 2001.

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Agenda item 2
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Draft decision submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Enabling the Commission on the Status of Women to carry out its mandate

The Economic and Social Council, recalling its resolution 1987/21 of 26 May 1987, in which it decided that, commencing with the thirty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission should meet annually until the year 2000, decides that the Commission should continue to meet annually thereafter, for a period of 10 working days.

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Commission on the Status of Women
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Agenda item 7
Provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Commission

Draft provisional agenda and documentation

Note by the Secretariat

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women:

(a) Review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system:

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system.

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001.

(b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men.

Documentation

Report containing additional material on further actions and initiatives for the preparation of the outlook beyond the year 2000 (General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 11).

(c) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern:

99-06770 (E) 110399

4. Comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, on the basis of national reports, taking into account the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6, sect. III, para. 5 (f))

Comparative report on how different categories of projects and programmes of United Nations organizations are including women's interests and gender mainstreaming issues and on resources allocated in this regard (General Assembly resolution 52/231, para. 14)

5. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions.

6. Communications concerning the status of women.

Documentation

Lists of confidential and non-confidential communications concerning the status of women

7. Provisional agenda for the forty-fifth session of the Commission.

8. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its forty-fourth session.

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Agenda item 2
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Draft decision submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Extraordinary meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women

The Economic and Social Council decides:

(a) That the Commission on the Status of Women shall resume its forty-third session, subject to the availability of services, for one day, on an exceptional basis, in order to complete its work;

(b) In this respect, the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962, 2128 (XX) of 20 December 1965 and 2245 (XXI) of 20 December 1966 regarding travel entitlements will be waived.

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